

## Jung's Active Imagination in Whitehouse's Dance: notions of body and movement

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**Abstract:** This study presents the notions of body and movement found in Mary Starks Whitehouse's dance, known as Authentic Movement. Whitehouse was a pioneer in the construction of therapeutic meaning of dance for using Carl Gustav Jung psyche theory. The analysis has been carried out after Whitehouse texts written between 1958 and 1979 and re-edited by Patrícia Pallaro in 1999. These research findings suggest that, in Whitehouse's view, the body is the physical aspect of the personality, becoming visible through its movement. This may be generated in a continuum between subconscious impulse and Ego control, not only to make the visibility of the current state of psyche possible, but also to generate changes in it. It is expected that this study brings contributions to both the Analytical Psychology and the Art Therapy field.

**Keywords:** active imagination, Jung, authentic movement.

### Introduction

Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961), one of the greatest intellectuals of his time, brought up important questionings for human thought, without restricting them to Psychology. He distanced himself from Sigmund Freud's theory and started creating his own theory for the functioning of the psyche, presenting us with Analytical Psychology.

The researches he performed in the clinical scenarios, with his patients and with himself, were extensive and in-depth, leading him to consider, in a certain moment of his professional life, that the structure and the process of a certain artistic production – drawing, painting, writing, among others – could be therapeutic instruments capable of giving form to the symbolic images originated during the treatment.

The construction of a theory for the functioning of the psyche and its proposal for therapeutic intervention through art, which he called Active Imagination, allowed him and other people to create epistemological bridges for their works, one of which is the therapeutic resource through dance. This resource enables us to get closer to two fundamental elements of the process: the *body* and the *movement*. Dance as a therapeutic resource reaffirms our bodily-motor condition and the need we have of staying *in* movement, whether to treat corporeal processes, psychical processes, or both simultaneously in the imbrication of their relationships.

Mary Starks Whitehouse was a pioneer in the use of the principles of the *Jungian* theory in dance as a therapeutic process. Although at first she resisted to term therapeutic, Whitehouse contributed greatly to the studies that

followed this line, which was firstly called *Movement in deep* and then *Authentic Movement*.

### Analytical procedures

This section highlights the notions of body and movement present in Whitehouse's work, which are identified in eight chapters that belong to the collection of essays edited by Patrícia Pallaro in 1999, in which the works of Whitehouse, Janet Adler and Joan Chodorow (and her disciples) are presented. The analyzed writings are from the years of 1956, 1958, 1963, 1969-70, 1972, 1977, 1978 and 1979 (original date of the publications), and they are composed of two interviews made with Whitehouse and articles she presented in academic meetings, published later on in academic magazines such as *Dance/Movement Therapy*, *American Journal of Dance Therapy*, *Contact Quarterly* and *Impulse*, in years after the original writing.

The importance of identifying these notions and possible fields for their insertions is due to the fact that a notion and an idea are elementary knowledges of what will later become a concept. It is necessary to be careful enough to understand that these notions cannot be considered within an evolutionary perspective, but within one that is always discontinuous.

Thus, it is necessary to provide a brief historical explanation that highlights the elements part of the construction of the Western Modern Dance that paved way for dance in its therapeutic sense. The following text is divided into four items: 1. *Docile and Fragmented Bodies*, in which Michel Foucault's concept of docile bodies is briefly presented, as well as the fragmentation of the body present into works of art and some ruptures made by artistic dance; 2. *The Dance in its therapeutic sense and Whitehouse's path* indicates the elements of the passage from artistic

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dance to therapeutic dance, as well as Whitehouse's path; 3. *The Active Imagination of Carl Gustav Jung* presents the explanation of the Active Imagination method and its implications; and 4. *Authentic Movement: notions of body and movement* shows Whitehouse's thought on body and movement. Lastly, final considerations are made regarding body and movement.

This study aims at collaborating with researches on the body *in* movement and contributing to the fields of Jungian psychology and Art Therapy.

## Docile and fragmented bodies

The origins of dance as a therapeutic activity are found within the construction of the Modern Western Dance in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, the political, economic, cultural and technological context of the first half of that century cannot be analyzed without considering the marks left behind by the two world wars (from 1914 to 1918 and from 1939 to 1945) and by the transformations brought by the industrial revolution in the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The effects of the wars encouraged the development of the fields of Medicine, Neurophysiology and Psychology, among others. The new surgical, anesthetic and pharmaceutical apparatus, as well as the first forms of visualizing the inside of the body in the field of Medicine, the new forms of psychic treatment in the field of Psychology, the therapeutic body approaches and the movement therapies were developed simultaneously to the effects of the wars.

In this perspective, it is necessary to notice that the experiences lived within the process of war, within combat or out of it, are first of all bodily experiences. Audoin-Rouzeau (2008) states that:

Every war experience is, first of all, a body experience. In war, it is the bodies that inflict violence, but it is also the bodies that suffer violence. This body aspect of the war is so intimately mixed with the own war phenomenon that it is hard to separate the "history of war" from a historical anthropology of the body experiences induced by the war activity. (p. 365)

Establishing differences between both world wars, the author points out that it is from the "psychic casualties" that we could reach the somatic again, considering that it was the sensorial aggressions suffered by the soldiers during the war that originated the combat traumas and the physical and psychic traumas experienced by civilians (hunger, torture, rape).

The preparation of the soldiers to face the war is carried out with a set of physical exercises, exit strategies and maneuvers (a body-movement-weapon relationship that is established in the constant exercise of readiness to shoot), among others. Since they are based on the principle

of disciplining bodies, they can be understood under Michel Foucault's concept of docility of bodies.

Discipline manufactures submissive and exercised bodies, <<docile bodies>>. Discipline increases the force of the body (in economic terms of usefulness) and decreases those same forces (in political terms of obedience). In one word: it dissociates the power from the body, on one hand making it an <<ability>>, a <<capability>> which discipline aims to increase; and on the other hand it inverts the energy, the power that could result from that, making it a relationship of strict subjection. If economical exploration separates force and the product of work, we can say that disciplinary coercion establishes in the body the coercive link between an increased ability and a pronounced domination. (Foucault, 1975/1996, p. 127, highlights by the author)

This docility of bodies can also be understood through the effects of the industrial revolution, which occurred in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and its new forms of work. It is possible to see that the body that fragments itself to answer to the new type of production also constitutes a docile body.

With industrialization, craftwork production was transformed into machine production, imposing a division in the manufacturing of the product. In this production system, what the worker does is only part of the final product, creating a type of "training" on his body – he always makes the same movement in an effective and economical way – which is demanded by the technique of operating the machine. As such, he himself becomes part of a large machinery.

From the perspective of Arts, it is in the relationship with the period before the war and the post-war world that the movement of the Modern Age can be seen, filled with variants and contradictions among the different movements of the many arts. However, the idea of fragmentation that was an element of the creation of the new before the war will reflect the agony over a world in pieces in the post-war scenario.

In the production of some artists, the *fragmentation of the body* is seen as an expressive element that results from the experience of disintegration of the being, whether in its physical, psychic or social aspect. For instance, the productions of Salvador Dali, Pablo Picasso, René Magritte, Hans Bellmer and others will be problematized in the sense of fragmentation, decomposition and dispersion: "the vocabulary that defines the modernist posture is exactly the same used to designate the idea of chaos, supposing the disintegration of an existing order, and equally implying the notions of detachment and disconnection from the whole." (Moraes, 2002, p. 59)

In dance, the process of deconstruction with the existing order starts when there is a gradual resistance to the rigid and disciplinary practice of Classic Ballet, which

was established during four centuries. The formation of dancers, choreographers and teachers focused on new approaches for the body, the movement and the concept of spectacle begins.

The resistance to the disciplinary work of Classic Ballet can be highlighted through two occurrences: the path of the dancer Isadora Duncan in the 1920s, whose creative work was based on emotions; and on the development of dance professionals in the years after that, which constructed Western Modern Dance, aiming to integrate not only the body as a whole *in* movement, but also the body and the psyche *in* movement.

The artists were in tune with the Neurophysiology studies performed by Charles Scott Sherrington, who in 1906 collected a set of perceptive behaviors of the body under the term Proprioception. Moreover, François Delsarte (1811-1871) studied how the body can translate inner states; Émile Jacques Dalcroze (1865-1950) created a method of rhythmic-motor education – *Eurythmics* and Rudolf von Laban (1879-1958) created a system of Movement Analysis – *Laban Movement Analysis* and a system to record movement – *Labanotation*, among other influences.

These artists were interested in the studies of Psychology in the initial stages of Somatic<sup>1</sup>, and in its posterior consequences, originating Somatic Education. Moshe Feldenkrais, Ida Rolfing, Gerda Alexander, Imgard Barthnief, among others, are some of those who carried out studies with their own bodies. These influences are relevant for the understanding of the thought of those who studied the modern dance of the time, as well as for the comprehension of the path dance takes toward its therapeutic sense. Among the many different lines of Psychology which were adopted at that time, Mary Starks Whitehouse chooses Carl Gustav Jung's Analytical Psychology.

## Dance in its therapeutic sense and the path of Mary Starks Whitehouse (1911-1979)

Around the 1930s, former dancers, teachers and choreographers started to explore more rigorously the therapeutic effects brought by the experience of dancing.

Chaiklin (2009), founding member of the *American Dance Therapy Association* – ADTA – points out that it was mostly women who were interested in these effects, with many of them coming from Psychoanalysis, which at that time was the main form of psychic treatment. Other women followed her studies on the theories Harry Stack Sullivan, Alfred Adler, Carl Gustav Jung, among others. It is possible to say that the transformation of artistic dance into therapeutic dance was based on a few important elements: the creative experience of the movement with its different consequences for artistic purposes, which began after the break with the classic choreographic model; improvisation as a key element of creative dance; the dancer

being the originator in the creative experience; the change of the meaning of dance itself to the person who dances; and especially the idea that the expressive experience of the dancing subject was not directed at the public or at an artistic end, but to the subject itself. Thus, the *process*, the *effects of the creative movement* and the *psychomotor expression* are the objects to be considered in the use of dance as a therapeutic resource, with the *body-mind* relationship as a foundation. The body-mind concept became the link between the different approaches. Chaiklin (2009) defines it as follows:

The mind-body concept has come full circle. All elements and components of a human are a set of related systems. Mind is indeed part of the body and body affects the mind. Much research is now being done by neurophysiologists and other scientists to examine those interrelationships. When speaking of the body, we are not only describing the functional aspects of movement, but how our psyche and emotions are affected by our thinking and how movement itself effects change within them. (p.5)

As we will see later, the imbricated body-movement-psyche relationship will be studied by Whitehouse in the therapeutic context of dance, which represents the beginning of the concepts of Carl Gustav Jung's Analytical Psychology in this line, using especially Active Imagination to shape her work.

Whitehouse's artistic path included great masters of modern dance, as well as different and important schools of the movement in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. She took courses in the Marta Graham School and in the Bennington Summer School of Dance and got degrees from the Wigman Central Institute (Mary Wigman's school in Dresden, Germany) and from the Jooss Ballet School, of Kurt Jooss, a disciple of Rudolf Laban and one of the founders of Dance Theater. Both Graham and Wigman were important names of American and German Western Modern Dance, respectively, influencing one another and changing the dance scenario.

Whitehouse retired from professional artistic dance not only because of the difficulties time brings with respect to body capabilities, but also because of a metamorphosis, a gradual change of interest, and personal life conditions – her children, a divorce, her experience of the personal analysis in the Jungian line with Hilde Kirsch in Los Angeles and the studies on Analytical Psychology at the Jung Institute in Zurich, according to Whitehouse (1963/1999c).

As a dance teacher, she began her work in the therapeutic line with her students, in her own studios, migrating from dance-spectacle to dance-therapy<sup>2</sup>, as many from

1 See specially Cerchiari (2000).

2 Dance therapy (written with separated terms) aims to encompass all works referring to the therapy of dance. The term *Danzaterapia* in Spanish, with both terms forming one word, refers exclusively to the therapeutic work of Maria Fux, known for her work with children with deafness.

her time. While Mary Starks developed her work, she contacted Trudi Schoop, Jeri Salkin and Marian Chace, also important names in the therapeutic line of dance.

Frantz (1972/1999), in an interview made with Whitehouse, reports that she graduated from Wellesley College and then taught from the East coast to the West Coast, at the Dance Faculty at the University of California and Los Angeles. Later on, as one of the pioneers of the therapeutic dance field, she became a founding member of the *American Dance Therapy Association*.

She found out in her classes that what she did, using the elements of *Jungian* psychology, helped people discover and handle personal issues. "It was an important day when I discovered that I didn't teach Dance, I taught People" (Whitehouse, 1969-1970/1999d, p. 59).

## The Active Imagination of Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961)

Active Imagination is a therapeutic technique or approach created by Jung, developed in the years that followed his professional separation from Freud in 1913, when he questioned the latter's interpretation about the functioning of the psyche. Profoundly affected by the separation, Jung said that he was "in a dead end", and in the midst of this crisis, he performed a self-experience<sup>3</sup> which lasted until 1930. He firstly called it "confrontation with the unconscious" and then Active Imagination.

For Jung, the unconscious behaves in a way that compensates or complements conscience and vice-versa. The following points show this relationship:

1) The contents of unconsciousness possess a threshold intensity, so that all elements that are too weak remain in the unconscious; 2) consciousness, because of its directed functions, exercises an inhibition (which Freud calls censorship) on all incompatible material, with the result that it sinks into the unconscious. 3) consciousness constitutes the momentary process of adaptation, whereas the unconscious contains not only all the forgotten material of the individual's own past, but all the inherited behavior traces constituting the structure of the human spirit and 4) the unconscious contains all the fantasy combinations which have not yet attained the threshold intensity, but which in the course of time and under suitable conditions will enter the light of the consciousness. (Jung, 1938/2013, p. 13)

In this perspective, he was interested in knowing how we confront the unconscious and the ways we have of identifying it. Jung (1938/2013, p. 27) considered that:

"When no fantasy is produced, we need to turn to artificial help". Active Imagination would be used in this sense.

The first step of this experience is to "liberate the unconscious processes that break out of conscience in the form of fantasies" (Jung, 1916/2008, p. 89), through exercises of for the elimination of critical attention. It is a conscious abandonment of the unconscious impulse, the contents of the latter may appear through a memory, a dream, voices, fantasies, etc.

In a second moment, it is necessary to agree with these contents in order to control the fantasy. To experience it, giving it form through writing, drawing, wood carving, painting, dancing and other forms of expression, according to the inclination each individual has regarding the production of their own fantasies. It is a confrontation between the conscious and the unconscious, in which both sides of the psyche maintain their role in its overall functioning.

Coming to terms with the counter-position is a serious matter on which sometimes a very great deal depends. Taking the other side seriously is an essential prerequisite of the process, for only in that way can the regulating factors exert an influence on our actions. Taking it seriously does not mean *taking it literally*, but it does mean giving the unconscious credit, so that it has a change to co-operate with consciousness instead of automatically disturbing it (Jung, 1938/2013, p. 35, highlights by the author).

If the contents of the unconscious are always ready to interfere with our actions, by making them conscious we avoid their interference and its consequences. The process of confronting the Ego as the center of consciousness and the unconsciousness may be compared to a dialogue between two people who equal rights to speak and present their arguments and positions. This "alternating of arguments and affections forms the transcendent function of the counter-positions" (Jung, 1938/2013, p. 36). Both should be considered so that the third element of this relationship is originated, which does not exclude the previous ones, but it opens a new possibility to confront problematic situations and expand consciousness.

Jung noticed that this experience made his thoughts become clearer and made him understand the fantasies better. In addition, he noticed that by giving form to the inner images, he reacquired inner peace. However, the experience he had with Active Imagination indicated some important issues as well. The first was the great resistance and anguish he felt, for if one hand there is an "effort to understand the world of the archetypes of the psyche; on the other it represents a struggle against the danger that threatens sanity, namely, of the fascination with the immeasurable heights, depths and paradoxes of the psychic truth." (Jung, 1941, in Palestra, apud Hanna, 2003 p. 122).

Another issue pointed out by Jung (1938/2013) in this experience is the risk of aesthetic overvaluation by the patient, i.e., a feeling of inferiority or superiority – with the

3 Jung recorded these experiences in his *Black Books*. After they were revised, with the inclusion of reflections, he transcribed them in calligraphy writing, containing his paintings, in a red leather bound book titled *Liber Novus*, which became known as the *Red Book*.



possibility of alternating between both – with respect to the final products of the fantasy (writing, drawing, sculpture, movement, etc.), which may drive the libido of the fundamental object away from the transcendent function. On the other hand, there is the risk of the content of the final product being analyzed from a strictly intellectual perspective, losing its symbolic value, since for Jung the symbols in an amplified view are one of the fundamental elements of his analytics, in which [evaluation] and meaning are given by the subject that produces.

In the other extreme, Jung indicates that, from a stage of psychic evolution, there is still the risk that these fantasies that were previously undervalued are now excessively overvalued.

### **Authentic Movement: notions of body and movement**

For Whitehouse, movement governs “the great law of life”. With that thought and her experience with *Jungian* analysis, she developed a work and called it *Movement in depth*. The work is composed of the experience of a person, called *mover*, who performs movements resulting from an inner impulse and who is assisted by another person, a teacher or an observer, which originally was Whitehouse herself. Later on, this role was performed by Janet Adler, her disciple, and started to be called *witness*. The experience is reported based on the sensations experienced by the mover and by the witness.

Although Mary already discussed the authenticity of movement when it originates from an inner impulse and becomes inevitable, it was with Janet Adler that the approach started to be called Authentic Movement.

According to Levy (1998), there are four fundamental aspects in Whitehouse’s theory and practice. They will be presented here since they allow us to understand the notions of body and movement reported by Whitehouse herself. The first is Kinesthetic Consciousness and refers to the bodily awareness *in* movement and *of* the movement itself; the second refers to *Authentic Movement*, which is directly related to Jung’s concept of Active Imagination and which enables us to understand the type of movement it emphasizes; the third aspect encompasses Polarity, also a Jungian concept, which indicates the antagonist extremities of the psychic contents, and which is used by Whitehouse to observe the polarity contained in the use of the body in movement; and lastly the Therapeutic Relationship through which Mary presents us her notion of the use of intuition as a teacher, therapist or even mediator, and that may show us how her work was developed by alternating between directing and not directing, suggesting and silencing. These aspects are continuously related to one another.

For Mary Starks, the notions of body and movement were directly related to an awareness of the body *in* movement, as well as an awareness *of* the movement, i.e., of the kinesthetic consciousness or kinesthetic sense. This did not mean that a “non-movement” within the therapeutic

environment reflected a “non-action”, as we will discuss later on.

It is possible to simultaneously have an awareness of the direction of our body in movement (to the front or to the back) and an awareness of *how* we move (jumping, screaming, twisting the arms, slowly, quickly, etc.). However, Whitehouse (1958/1999b) pointed out that this kinesthetic sense is not always conscious and needs to be awakened.

The kinesthetic sense can be awakened and developed in using any and all kinds of movement, but I believe it becomes conscious only when the inner – that is, the *o* subjective – connection is found, the sensation of what it feels like to the individual, whether it is swinging, stretching, bending, turning, twisting or whatever. People can learn movement in a variety of ways. They are not necessarily enabled to feel it when they do so. (p.46)

For Whitehouse, the body could never be considered a machine, regardless if we treat it as such.

The body is the physical aspect of the personality, and movement is the personality made visible. The distortions, tensions, and the restrictions are the distortions, tensions and restrictions within the personality. They are, at any given moment, the condition of the psyche. And the discovery of their factual existence, their physical existence, is the beginning of the process of what might be called psychosomatic recognition, for we are psychosomatic entities. . . . But we are not accustomed to the idea that the conscious experience of physical movement produces changes in the psyche. . . . The awakening of awareness of how one moves, in what manner, (slow or fast, heavy or light, restricted or easy) leads to a perception which carries over into recognition of the character, also, of daily or habitual body usage. (Whitehouse, 1963/1999c, p. 52)

It should be pointed out that this notion of kinesthetic sense or meaning is compatible with the discoveries made by Sherrington in 1906 about Proprioception (as the capacity or quality of perception of the still or moving body), which the current Neurophysiology considers to be one of the sensorial sub-modalities of the Somesthesia Modality.

This perspective of the body and the psyche may be understood also in a synchronic way, i.e., without temporal hierarchies, for the bodily experience lived *in/into* movement may simultaneously bring about an awareness in the body-psyche that we are.

Otherwise, we can see that in the therapeutic context these notions are intimately close to the definition of body-mind by Chaiklin (2009), which was previously presented in this work.

For Whitehouse (1956/1999a), it was very clear that the experience of the body *in* movement to which she referred to was different from the one felt in sports and in gymnastics. She said that they “increase circulation and improve coordination. But they do not connect us with ourselves because they still bring an external reason of the experience” (p. 35), i.e., in these practices we move our body with a purpose. In the same work, she points out that the conception that we have of the body as an object, similarly to that we have of a chair, occurs because we are not aware that what we call a “body” or “my body” is actually ourselves.

Considering that the artistic and therapeutic works of dance were also influenced by the studies of Rudolf von Laban, with his comprehensive analysis of movement, and by the many lines of Psychology, one of the question that artists and therapists wanted to answer as: *how do we move?* For Whitehouse it was no different, but the influence of the German teacher, ballerina and choreographer Mary Wigman in her work, which had *improvisation* as the strong point of her interest and study, left Whitehouse concerned and led her to another question: *where does movement begin?*

For Wigman, improvisation should be analyzed through impulsion, through an inner listening to oneself that could lead to movement. The important aspect to be highlighted is that the movement generated by the inner listening brings presence to the body in space, in states which are difficult to apprehend. In this sense, for Wigman the formation of the ballet dancer should be free from technical instructions in order to instinctively explore that which needed to be expressed. A rupture with the harmony of the body, “a balance between two moments: it is neither expression for expression, neither form for form, but an intimate fusion of both terms” (Garaudy, 1980, p. 109).

Impulsion and improvisation were the elements that Whitehouse used to question the origin of movement as related to the psychic content. In this direction, the research aimed at the spontaneous movement of the students, patients or clients. She asked them to close their eyes and listen to their bodies:

a listening of the body, an emptiness in which change can happen. Following the inner sensation, allowing the impulse to take the form of physical action, is active imagination in movement, just as following the visual image is active imagination in fantasy. (Whitehouse, 1963/1999c, p. 52)

Following the inner sensations prioritized an attention to the formation of mental images, with the purpose of accelerating the process of forming symbols, which in its turn enables a confrontation between the ego and the content of the unconscious.

Whitehouse stated that movement, a result of improvisation, could never be repeated or reproduced by others.

Distancing herself from the idea of an ideal movement, for her this experience encompasses two types of movement performed by the same individual, each with different implications. The first is the spontaneous movement in which the sensation is that we are being moved (*I am moved*). This movement has an emotional weight and comes from the impulse that generated it. As for its opposite, which she calls invisible movement, there is a decision to act (*I move*), it is that movement in which there is a control of the ego for its realization. It means that there is muscle action, but under control.

Whitehouse was concerned with the discovery of the *deep, authentic movement* – I am moved! – but she understood that there was a *continuum* between both actions – I am moved and I move. Similarly to the aware-unaware dynamics, both forms of movement could happen in the therapeutic process, indicating the set of experiences of movement of each person.

The moment when “I am moved” happens is astonishing both to dancers and to people who have no intention of becoming dancers. It is a moment when the ego gives up control, stops choosing, stops exerting demands, allowing the Self to take over moving the physical body as it will. (Whitehouse, 1979/1999e, p. 82)

Improvisation and the generating impulse were also elements of the experiences of artistic dance in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, such as the work of Loïe Fuller, an American dancer that in 1891 performed on stage representing a young woman deep in hypnotic sleep, in a time in which psychoanalysis made experiments about the theme in Europe. The artists, enchanted with the new experimentations and possibilities to access the psychic through movement, sought *involuntary movement*. This would become one of the fundamental themes of the history of modern and contemporary dance, in which the body presents itself as a “revealer of unconscious mechanisms, both psychic and physical”. (Suquet, 2008, p. 517)

Active Imagination in movement could bring about “insights”, affecting the daily life of the individual. Thus, she encouraged her students to incorporate their fantasies and verify that the unconscious contents move unexpectedly between each other, presenting issues both in a personal and universal level.

There is no limit and no guarantee of consistency. Images, inner voices, move suddenly from one thing to another. The levels from which they come are not always personal levels; a universal human connection with something much deeper than the personal ego is represented. (Whitehouse, 1979/ 1999e, p. 82)

The fact that we inherited standards of behaviors, which is something common to all mankind, implies that the contents of the unconscious “do not manifest themselves only in clinical material, but also in mythological,

religious and artistic materials, and in all cultural activities through which the man expresses himself” (Von Franz, 1964/2008, p.419).

Jung (1938/2013) was concerned with the fact that the expressive experience should always be recorded so that the person could reflect on it later. However, that which stays in the body is hardly translated by oral or written language<sup>4</sup>, drawing, sculpture and other forms of expression when we work with spontaneous movement.

In this work, the element we work with is the process and not the product, for that which is experimented does not materialize into any object except itself, what the body is or the “sensations of the current states of the body”<sup>5</sup>.

The technological recording of the images provides us only with a visualization of movements which were spontaneously created. Although the experience itself does not create a choreography with beginning, middle and end, and although it cannot be repeated, the results of the *inner impulse* may provide an expansion of the motor repertoire experienced or imagined by the own executor, and in this same perspective, an expansion of awareness.

About the *Jungian* concept of Polarities, Mary Starks links the polarities present in many aspects of our lives. From the psychic contents of the conscious and the unconscious to the female and male genders, and to all muscle action: agonist muscles (main action of the movement) and antagonist muscles (act in opposition to the first movements). She wanted to bring attention to the polarity which is inherent to the standard of movement and observed that the impulse could also be polarized during the execution of the movement.

Thus, she worked during her sessions with exercises that could promote awareness and the balance of the pairs of opposites of the body – arms and feet (right-left) – as well as the pairs of opposites of movement with respect to time, space and weight (slow-quick, front-back, light-heavy, etc.).

Whitehouse’s intention was to bring awareness to the student regarding this polarization and the unconscious material contained in that polarized impulse. For instance: from the impulse, we can observe if we are moving only one side of the body, if we are moving only on the floor, or if the movements we perform are always quick, among other possibilities.

Here we see the influence of Laban’s studies about movement in Whitehouse’s work. The analysis provides us with a range of exploratory possibilities for the movement in the creative process, as well as a thorough observation of the executed movements.

However, polarity can also be seen between the moving and the not moving:

Non-action in action; action in non-action. Both pairs are in each half of the total saying. They cannot be opposed; they go together. For me, it means that in not doing anything, something is done. In taking no action there is already some action going on. The other half indicates a parallel possibility. In acting, in choosing, there is no action – the Me, the ego does not do anything, does not choose. (p.83)

In the decision of the mover, moving and not moving is characterized by an act, a decision. This is why the “not moving”, which is characterized as opposed to the action of moving in the physical space, is equally important, for it is active in the psychic sense. And although the “nonaction” seems passive in the motor sense, the muscle tonus works continuously to maintain the body in a certain position. The conscious experience of both these situations may generate changes in the psyche.

The actions of the mover regarding the impulse have a quality that sets the Authentic Movement apart from other forms of work with active imagination. In the game of the awareness of the body, still or moving, the notion of weight and the position of the limbs, as well as the motor production that becomes visible in the physical space, have the dynamics of two systems which are already dynamic (Body Schema and Body Image) and two categories of existence (Time and Space).

By characterizing movement as a law of life, Whitehouse agrees with Sheets-Johnstone (2005), who understands body schema and image as two kinetic and transient experiences. In face of the unconscious and the intention of awareness, body image and schema are ways to be/experiment the world, such as time and space. And they make themselves dynamically visible in the motor functions.

The time and space categories have opposed characteristics when analyzed in the relationship between the conscious and the unconscious, i.e., awareness works with time linearity, concreteness and the limit of space, while in the unconscious space can be infinite and the occurrences may be simultaneous in time. Hence, active imagination in the context of Authentic Movement can present the risk of the mover becoming absorbed in the excess of unconscious content. Chodorow (1978/1999, p. 241) recommends that the work is performed with a reasonably stable individual, whose Ego is sufficiently strong to confront the contents of the Unconscious as equals.

Whitehouse was greatly concerned with the therapeutic relationship in her work, in which she considered intuition to be an important requisite. As the one who leads, teaches and mediates the actions of others, she will tell us that the first professional attitude in this approach is to consider *who is* the person we are treating. It implies

4 Nowadays, Soraia Jorge Rodrigues Filha (researcher and introducer of the Authentic Movement in Brazil and in Lisbon, Creator of the International Authentic Movement Center, together with Guto Macedo, and of the Authentic Movement Learning Program) has worked hardly so that the mover and the witness, in their moments of reflection, may search for the word that better defines their experience of the body in movement.

5 Sensations of the current states of the body. See especially Farah (2011).

interrupting preconceptions and one's own ideas, as well as distancing oneself from the ideal models for those people. Therefore, it also implies "the willingness to become anonymous to favor a quick observation, without any barriers, about what is available for that individual". (Whitehouse, 1979/1999e, p.86).

In the absence of an expressive-motor autonomy of the student/client, their session could be developed in a semi-directed away, with the suggestion of a theme, of metaphors, images or questions that bring about investigations in the movements.

In this sense, Whitehouse (1979/1999e) points out that the intuition of the teacher/therapist would allow them to know *what* to do and *when* it should be done, i.e., in which moment it is necessary to offer something as a suggestion if there is no choice, but without any imposition, in a way that the individual may accept or reject the suggestion and create their own solutions to do it their own way. However, she warns that:

There are risks in doing it this way. One is not knowing what will happen and yet being able to stand it – this applies to both teacher and client. A second is that long silences are necessary to provide waiting, a quietness into which the mover can sink, find himself and then move. Waiting too long can be as destructive as not waiting long enough. (Whitehouse, 1979/1999e, p. 86)

Therefore, we see that the intuition Whitehouse talks about refers to two attitudes: an action of the therapist that directs, suggest and questions the actions of the clients, providing help so that they can express their feelings and thoughts as freely as possible, following their needs and impulses through movement; a non-action, maintaining a relationship of quiet waiting by the therapist, who trusts and encourages the decision-making of the client.

Later on, this "role" developed and conceptualized as *witness* by Janet Adler has an important function, which is no longer that of teacher/therapist/mediator. The witness is someone from the group that assumes the function of witnessing the other moving, forming the pair mover and witness. The witness "is not watching the person move, they are witnessing, listening, bringing a quality specific to attention or presence to the experience of the mover" (Adler, 1987/1999, p. 142).

Sarger (2013) points out that a great part of Whitehouse's work and her writing concentrated in the development of the awareness of the mover related to the impulse, but it makes small references to that which, in the current practice of Authentic Movement, is called witness consciousness. Although she didn't carry out a systemized study on the role of the inner witness, at that moment she had a deep understanding of it in the role of observer of her students in movement.

Whitehouse's followers – Janet Adler and Joan Chodorow – brought other consequences to the *Authentic*

*Movement* approach, carrying out studies on the inner and outer witness and discussing issues such as spirituality, mystical experience, sexuality, the transcendental function of dance therapy, individual work, among others.

Mary Starks always positioned herself as a dance teacher and resisted to the idea of saying that she had a "theoretical model" to characterize her work. She understood that any theoretical model could be adopted, but it wouldn't translate the experience of the process one faces in practice, in the relationship with the other.

The *Authentic Movement*, as a method or an approach as Whitehouse preferred to adopt, is inserted into the fundamental fields of the construction of the entire dance, which aims to be creative in the analytical process: improvisation, inner impulse, the possibility of movement for all *subjects-bodies*, but especially the encounter with what we really are, or the psychophysical state we are in.

It is a completely self-directed form in which individuals may discover a movement pathway that offers a bridge between the conscious and the unconscious. It explores the relationship between a mover and a witness. With eyes closed, the mover listens inwardly and finds a movement arising from a hidden prompting, a cellular impulse. Gradually the invisible becomes visible, the inaudible becomes audible, and explicit form is given to the content of direct experience. (AUTHENTIC MOVEMENT INSTITUTE, 2013)

One of the most important issues for those interested in working in this field is the willingness to feel our own body in movement, it is to become destitute of the analytic agent and let ourselves move in this dynamic of psychic content, before formulating our practice to the other.

As every pioneer in the field, Mary Whitehouse was a fighter and worked until the end of her life, when she was on a wheelchair, stricken by multiple sclerosis<sup>6</sup>. But her professional path inserted her into the scenario of development of this therapeutic field, in which her most famous disciples, Janet Adler, Joan Chodorow and Nancy Zenoff, reaffirm her greatness by combining improvisation and *Jungian* concepts with the body *in* movement.

## Final considerations

We are moving beings, whether through the movement we execute for a task or to shift in space. However, we are also beings which are moved – in space and time – by infinite purposes that may impose us a certain attitude in a given situation, and that is only possible through a motility that puts us into action in the world.

6 Multiple Sclerosis – Neurological autoimmune disease, demyelinating, i.e., the immune system attacks the myelin, which is the layer of lipids that covers neurons and that helps the conduction of nervous impulses.



The body, even in its physical limit, keeps itself alive through movements which are almost imperceptible, in a way that, by principle, “the body forms a pair with motility, in a relationship that does not extinguish itself, except with death”. (Farah, 2010, p. 406).

Our subjectivation experiences and processes are carried out in this unit of existence of ours, as a revolving door that enables a continuous dialogue between the inside and the outside, updating and confronting information, feelings and emotions.

It is a subject-body that speaks. And if the word exchanged between the analyzed and the analyst is capable of touching the body, the body in movement is capable of driving the verb forward.

Thus, Mary Starks Whitehouse worked exhaustively on the knowledge of/in the body in movement, a “freefall”, and on the power of transformation that the movement generated by an inner impulse is capable of promoting.

### **A imaginação ativa junguiana na Dança de Whitehouse: noções de corpo e movimento**

**Resumo:** Este estudo apresenta as noções de corpo e movimento presentes na dança de Mary Starks Whitehouse, conhecida como Authentic Movement – Movimento Autêntico. Ela foi pioneira dentro da construção do sentido terapêutico da dança a utilizar os princípios da teoria da psique de Carl Gustav Jung. A análise foi realizada a partir de textos originalmente escritos por Whitehouse, durante os anos de 1958 e 1979 e reeditados por Patrícia Pallaro em 1999. O resultado da pesquisa sinaliza que, para Whitehouse, o corpo é o aspecto físico da personalidade que, por sua vez, se faz visível no movimento. Este pode ser gerado num *continuum* entre o impulso inconsciente e o comando do Ego e possibilita a visibilidade da condição atual da psique, bem como gerar mudanças nela. Espera-se que este estudo traga contribuições no campo da Psicologia Analítica e da Arteterapia.

**Palavras-chave:** imaginação ativa; Jung; movimento autêntico.

### **L’imagination active junguienne dans la Danse de Whitehouse: notions de corps et de mouvement**

**Résumé:** Cette étude présente les notions de corps et de mouvement présentes dans la danse de Mary Starks Whitehouse, connue sous le nom de « Authentic Movement » (Mouvement Authentique). Dans la construction du sens thérapeutique de la danse, elle a été la pionnière à utiliser les principes de la théorie de la psyché de Carl Gustav Jung. L’analyse a été réalisée à partir de textes originellement écrits par Whitehouse pendant les années 1958 et 1979 et réédités par Patricia Pallaro en 1999. Le résultat de la recherche indique que, chez Whitehouse, le corps est l’aspect physique de la personnalité qui, à son tour, se fait visible dans le mouvement. Celui-ci peut être générée dans un *continuum* entre l’impulsion inconsciente et l’ordre du Moi et permet la visibilité de l’état actuel de la psyché, ainsi que d’y engendrer des changements. On espère qu’avec cette étude l’on puisse apporter des contributions dans le domaine de la Psychologie Analytique et de l’Art-thérapie.

**Mots-clés:** imagination active, Jung, mouvement authentique.

### **La Imaginación Activa junguiana en la Danza de Whitehouse: nociones de cuerpo y movimiento.**

**Resumen:** Este estudio presenta las nociones de cuerpo y movimiento presentes en la danza de Mary Starks Whitehouse, conocida como Authentic Movement – Movimiento Autêntico. Ella fue pionera dentro de la construcción del sentido terapêutico de la danza a utilizar los principios de la teoría de la psique de Carl Gustav Jung. El análisis fue realizado a partir de textos originalmente escritos durante los años de 1958 y 1979, reeditados por Patrícia Pallaro en 1999. El resultado de la pesquisa señala que, para Whitehouse, el cuerpo es el aspecto físico de la personalidad que, por su vez, se hace visible en el movimiento. Esto puede ser generado en un *continuum* entre el impulso inconsciente y el comando del Ego y posibilita la visibilidad de la condición actual de la psique, bien como generar mudanzas en ella. Se espera con este estudio traer contribuciones en el campo de la Psicología Analítica y de la Arteterapia.

**Palabras clave:** imaginación activa; Jung; movimiento autêntico.

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